

Description of pilot case: Leipzig 2

Case

- 1 Learner
- Amount of sessions: 10
- Duration of the sessions: 30-60 min
- Coach and learner did not know each other before.
- The learner is in her early twenties. She arrived from Eritrea a few months before the coaching started and attended German classes at a vocational school. In Eritrea she visited a regular school. After she finished school, she worked as an accountant. The learner knows how to read and write; she also knows the Latin alphabet, but has grapheme-phoneme-correspondence problems. It is her main aim to continue to work in the job that she has worked in Eritrea.
- German classes in this school lead to A2 to B1 Level. The class had new entries permanently, what made teaching very difficult. The learner intended to change into another more stable group which was also on a higher level. She attended the coaching on her own will after the teacher told her about the extra support, without being very explicit about the kind of support.

Background of coach: The coach is an experienced teacher for adult education. Recently, she has particularly worked with child care workers. She attended several trainings for conversation techniques. She has no experience in the field of second language learning, but has a degree in health science and logopaedics. She attended an extern coach-training during the pilot and used the knowledge she gained there.

What was the coach asked to do?

The coach was asked to support learners in 1 to 1 coaching sessions, following the ALL-SR (non-directive) coaching methodology, but also to be sensitive for the learners needs and to develop and use coaching materials, when necessary.

Coach training: The coach attended two half-day ALL-SR coach training-sessions in Leipzig.

Furthermore she practiced a collegial counseling with a coach. The project team in Leipzig additionally provided coaches with supervision by an experienced language coach.

Pilot site: The pilot site is a vocational school for gastronomy and baker's trade. It is located about five kilometers north of the city-center of Leipzig. Most of the students are young adults between 16 and 19 years old, speaking German. In addition to a full study program for vocational education, the school also offers German courses with a vocational component. Courses start on a level of A0 and have a duration of all in all 1200 hours (about 1 school year). Language courses are preparatory-classes and therefore not a part of a vocational education and training.

Findings

The learner's aim was to learn German and take all necessary steps in order to work as an accountant. In conclusion we would classify the coaching as partly successful. During the first sessions, it has been most important to the coach, to clarify the learner's specific educational needs.

In the fourth session, the coach changed the methodology and, together with the learner, evaluated the current state. This included the learner's aims and personal resources. The coach highlighted aspects, the learner had mentioned in the past sessions:

- Her main aims (working as an accountant, finding another job, if working as an accountant should be too difficult due to language problems, being independent from interpreters/ being autonomous),
- Language aims (reading, writing, vocabulary),
- Learning conditions (learning material, learning in school in an appropriate class/ course, an own flat to have a quiet place to learn in, with little distraction from other people).

The coach and the learner created connections between these aspects and articulated the following steps, including changes, such as, finding a flat (to learn without distraction/ noise), buying learning material, changing the class and making contact with German speaking people. At the end of the project, changes were made: The learner was looking for a flat and explored the opportunities of changing the class/ course. She made contact with German speaking teachers in her asylum and changed the school. She also bought additional learning material, as she received money. Although there was evidence that coaching was helpful for the learner's educational development, the learner was not fully satisfied with the coaching and did not make a connection between the sessions and the steps she took. How can this be explained?

We argue that the learner's rating resulted from the discrepancy between the aims of the coach and the aims of the learner. The coach focused on the coaching's aims (self-confidence, self-awareness, learner autonomy) in order to solve certain problems in a second instance, being non-directive (an unknown method to the learner), while the learner wanted the problems to be solved by the coach (directive). She wanted information and guidance.

Lessons learned

- Non-directive coaching is helping the learners to realize their own learning behavior, although the learners might not see positive outcome, if they expect something else from the support (i.e. guidance). In the data a development is evident.
- There is a change in the awareness, but we don't know, if the learner recognizes the function of this awareness. This question appears to be striking, because we see a direct connection between this awareness and an understanding of coaching. In other words: a learner that understands that coaching is leading to an increased awareness and that it helps the coachee to improve his or her learning, supports him or her to take steps and so on, will more likely develop a positive attitude towards coaching and might use this support for his/ her own purpose. Consequently, an important topic of coaching is to make this clear.
- Learners have to be willing to make changes. If there is no specific learning aim, it is difficult to plan further steps. Coaches should then consider, whether coaching is an appropriate support for the learner.
- Depending on the learner's reasons to ask for help, the coaching can either be appropriate or other kinds of support should be considered (i.e. teaching, more directive counseling, strategy training). If a coach is able to change into other variants of coaching, it could be eligible, but the change needs to be made transparent for the learner.
- supervision is helpful for both: beginners and advanced coaches
- Coaches need a longer training that includes as much practice as possible

- Materials that help to reflect on resources are useful (developed/ adopted during the project)
- Coaching is not simply a language training. It only works, if the coaching language has a level of A2 or higher. Bilingual coaches who share the same L1 with the learner could be most helpful to make clear, what coaching is about and what it is not about.
- 10 sessions was an inappropriate amount of sessions for this type of learner. Depending on the reasons learners attend the coaching, the coaching can be up to 6 sessions only, particularly, if coaching is not directly linked to German lessons, or even part of it. Consequently, further conceptualization in terms of an integration of coaching methodology into language classes appears to be very interesting.